

**Minutes of the
Northern Lights / Bayfield County Special Study Committee Meeting
1:30pm, June 19, 2023**

**Meeting was held Remotely through Microsoft Teams and in person in the Bayfield County
Emergency Operations Center, Washburn, WI**

Members Present: Jeff Silbert, Mark Ehlers, Mary Dougherty

Members Excused: Ellen Avol-Law

Others Present: Mark Abeles-Allison-County Administrator, Paige Terry-Clerk III, Carrie Linder-Bayfield County Human Services Aging & Disability Services Manager, Kellie Pederson-UW Extension Community Development Educator, Kim Mattson-Bayfield County Accountant, Michelle Stouffer-Acting Northern Lights Administrator, Mark Radmer-Fond Du Lac Harbor Haven Health and Habilitation Nursing Home Administrator

Called to order at 1:32 p.m. by *Committee Chair*, Mary Dougherty

Introduction and Welcome Remarks: Introductions were made.

Purpose Statement Review: Silbert asked that the purpose statement end on a more positive note stating the intention to keep the facility open. The committee agree and a revised purpose statement will be presented at the next meeting.

Minutes from June 5, 2023: *Motion by Silbert, seconded by Ehlers to approve the minutes for the June 5, 2023 Northern Lights / Bayfield County Special Study Committee Meeting. Motion carried.*

Public Comment: None.

1:37 p.m. - The committee moved Radmer up on agenda.

Guest Speakers:

- a) **Mark Radmer:** Abeles-Allison gave Harbor Haven Health and Habilitation Nursing Home Administrator, Mark Radmer, a brief history of the financial struggles of Northern Lights. Radmer gave background information on the Fond Du Lac nursing home and explained that the facility's success is largely contributed to the county's willingness to try new things. Radmer suggested that Northern Lights and Bayfield County looking to expanding the available services to possibly include short-term rehabilitation services, dementia care, end of life care, and assisted living. Harbor Haven had reduced the facility's number of beds as well as renovated the building to better accommodate the fewer beds. Other suggestions Radmer made included reviewing major renovations in Northern Lights, the specifics of the renovations, assisted living availability and demand, as well as identifying the capacity and capabilities of the facility to handle available patients.

Abeles-Allison asked Radmer what financial assistance Harbor Haven receives from Fond Du Lac County. Radmer replied not a lot and explained that the facility's financial situation is rather unique as it is housed in a building that also hold other county offices. Harbor Haven functions as the landlord of the building and receives interdepartmental revenue from the other departments in the building. Radmer reviewed the resident census of Harbor Haven. Ehlers asked if the payroll and/or purchasing components ran through the county. Radmer replied that an individual is responsible for payroll, but their salary is only partly paid by the facility. Silbert inquired about the wages of Harbor Haven's CNAs and RNAs. Radmer reported that the CNAs wages range from \$17-\$20/hour and RNAs wages range from \$35-\$37/hour. Radmer reviewed Harbor Haven's funding sources. It was recommended that Northern Lights ensure that their staffing ratios are not unbearable. Abeles-Allison asked about Harbor Haven's annual budget. Radmer replied that the facility averages \$11 million in revenues and expenses each year.

2:31 p.m. – Mark Radmer left the meeting.

- b) **For Profit Nursing Home:** No speaker was present for the meeting.
- c) **Rene Eastman:** Eastman was not present for the meeting.

2022 Draft Financial Compilation and Updated Cash Flow Budget: Ehlers reviewed the financial compilation with the committee stating that supplies expenses have gone up. The facility's accountant has the building listed in its assets, but Ehlers stated he is working with the accountant because he believes the county owns the building. Abeles-Allison clarified that the county does own the building. Ehlers reviewed the cash flow statement of the facility. Cash flows from operating activities started at approximately -\$342,000. At the end of 2022, Northern Lights had \$19,953 in cash and cash equivalents. Silbert asked Ehlers if Northern Lights has received the money owed by the IRS. Ehlers answered no and stated that he and Abeles-Allison had a meeting with a representative who explained that the facility was approved for \$447,000 and the funds should be received approximately 8-10 weeks after receiving their award letter. These funds do not include the Wisconsin Medicare Rate Reimbursement that the facility is also owed. Ehlers informed the committee that Northern Lights is predicted to end the year with positive funds, but will be short \$300,000 the following year.

Capital Plan: Chairwoman Dougherty dispensed with the item due to time constraints of the meeting.

County Collaboration Options: Abeles-Allison reported that the Bayfield County IT Department will be sending two employees to Northern Lights to complete an assessment of the current technology at the nursing home. The county will also be sending their roofing expert to complete an assessment of the facility's roof in July.

Market Study Commissioned by Northern Lights: Pederson suggested that a representative from the hospital attend a meeting to give a presentation on the potential clients that are exiting the hospital. Discussion took place regarding the census of the nursing home and the ratio of patients enrolled in Medicare. Dougherty reminded the committee that the focus of the committee would not be the operational aspects of Northern Lights and instead would focus

more on structural and big-picture aspects. Dougherty raised the question of moving the Bayfield County Human Services Aging and Disability section to the nursing home as a possible option. Pederson asked if the committee could get a tour of the Northern Lights facility. Ehlers answered yes.

Silbert stated that the lease for Northern Lights needs to be redone. Dougherty suggested waiving all lease payments and making the county responsible for certain capital costs of the facility. Extensive discussion took place regarding potential financial options for the nursing home. Pederson questioned what the facility is doing to look at other potential services and mentioned the idea of adding a section in the facility for advanced dementia care.

Organizational Structures in Wisconsin:

- a) Government: City, County, State, Federal**
- b) Non-Profit: Religious, Corporation, Other**
- c) For-Profit**

Chairwoman Dougherty dispensed with the item due to time constraints of the meeting.

Next Meeting Topics: The committee discussed the following topics:

- Bayfield County-Northern Lights Collaboration Options
- A Northern Lights Market Assessment
- Representative Speaker from the Hospital
- Assessment Regarding Loss of County Revenue by Outsourcing Dementia Care Patients
- Tour of Northern Lights

Linder stated that she has contact with a state demographer that may be able to provide numbers regarding the types of patients and potential clientele that are likely to visit Northern Lights. Pederson questioned if Northern Lights could experience costs savings by moving payroll from the nursing home to the county. Discussion took place regarding adjusting the non-profit model of Northern Lights by moving payroll to the county.

Next Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (Northern Lights)
- Monday, July 24, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (EOC)
- Monday, August 7, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (EOC)
- Monday, August 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. (EOC)

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paige Terry.